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SUBJECT: SPECIAL REPORT: INDIAN MEDIA COMMENTARY ON  
IRAN'S ELECTIONS (CONTINUED)

Summary: More editorial commentary on the Iranian elections appeared in the Indian media today. Editorialists continued to see irregularities in the elections, with some demanding "credibly-monitored, fresh elections" and others exhorting President Ahmadinejad to allow a recounting of the votes. Going a step further, one writer said Ahmadinejad's victory will simply mean the empowerment of non-state actors like Hamas and Hizbollah. One columnist cautioned India to guard against being prejudiced by the U.S. against Iran. Commentary from India's leading English and vernacular newspapers follows. End summary.

-- COMMENTARY IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE PRESS

1. "IRAN ON THE BOIL," editorial in left-influenced THE HINDU: "The official declaration of incumbent President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad as a runaway winner in a hotly disputed and possibly rigged presidential election has generated a white heat of popular anger that has no precedent in Iran's post-revolution history. Three days after the spontaneous protests began, cracks have opened up in Iran's complex system of Islamic governance. The explosive situation seems to have divided the country's clerical establishment, a key power centre. Only a free, fair, and credibly monitored fresh election can heal a nation that is treading a thin line between fear of theocratic authoritarianism and hope of genuine reform that is not in conflict with the revolution's fundamentals."

¶2. "IRAN AFTER THE ELECTIONS," op-ed in June 17 centrist THE TRIBUNE: "Ahmadinejad is an eyesore for the Western world as he popularized the idea of the nuclear program among the masses. His domestic policies may not have earned him many domestic friends but his foreign policy enjoys wide support. And probably this is the only factor that has worked in his favor and got him another term. The Arabs were praying hard to see a return of reformist forces like Khatami in the form of Moussavi, to mend the broken fences. Ahmadinejad's victory will simply mean empowerment of non-state actors like Hamas and Hizbollah in the region which may further sour the unpleasant relationship between the Arabs and Iran."

¶3. "IRAN ELECTIONS SHOW WAY FORWARD," editorial in Chennai-based independent THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS: "Iran's de facto ruler Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has ordered a probe into the entire business. It remains to be seen whether the inquiry will be more than mere window dressing, and how transparently it will be conducted. It does, however, indicate that Khamenei may be responding, even if reluctantly, to public outcry. And the momentum seems to be shifting away from the religious hardliners. Any intervention by the international community in the affairs of an unfortunately theocratic country will neither help Iran nor the world. For the outside world, especially U.S. President Obama, 'least said, soonest mended' may be a good policy. It must continue to engage with Tehran."

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-- EDITORIALS IN THE VERNACULAR PRESS

¶4. "IRAN'S CONTROVERSIAL PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION," editorial in June 17 nationalist Urdu daily, AKHBAR-E-MASHRIQUE: "Ahmadinejad should read the writing on the wall. He should keep in mind that there has been countrywide violence in the wake of the election results. He should, therefore, go in for recounting in deference to the wishes of the opposition."

¶5. "THE AMERICAN LINK IN INDIA-IRAN RELATIONS," op-ed in June 17 centrist Hindi daily, HINDUSTAN: "Very few in India care about Iran because our new government wants to keep its friend and partner the U.S. in good humor. The U.S. has spared no efforts to demonize Iran lately. From the way Ahmadinejad had to struggle against his political opponents to win, it seems like gross oversimplification to say the Iranian elections were a sham. The U.S. does not want India and Iran to come closer. It is always gunning for Iran, but blissfully ignores Pakistan's wrongdoings and actually rewards it! India should not give in to U.S. pressure. We should decide our foreign policy keeping in mind our national interests."

¶6. "IRAN ELECTIONS UNDER SCANNER," editorial in June 17 right-of-center Hindi daily, JANSATTA: "Ahmadinejad's election has sparked off major protests in Iran and a probe has been ordered. Maybe the only objective of the probe is to gain respite from the ongoing protests. But Ahmadinejad's election and the attempt to give it legitimacy will always remain suspect. Meanwhile, Iran's biggest challenge now will be to accommodate the widespread demands for change in the country."  
BURLEIGH